



Birmingham Theological Seminary  
2200 Briarwood Way  
Birmingham, Alabama 35243  
(205) 776-5650

### **Advanced Biblical Counseling Syllabus**

**Semester:** Spring  
**Day & Time:** Monday, 5:30-7:20  
**Professor:** Dr. Andy Wisner  
**Email:** [Andy@fbc.org](mailto:Andy@fbc.org)

**Course:** BC1810 Advanced Biblical Counseling  
**Room:** VC  
**Credits:** 2  
**Phone:** 256-797-3093

**Course Note:** Every class will have prepared class discussion, so class participation is most important.

**Course Description:** This course is designed to equip the counselor to understand and counsel situations and topics that are more intense and require an advanced understanding of anthropology and application of Theology.

#### **Course Objectives:**

- The student will learn how to relate secular and biblical diagnoses.
- The student will learn how to put these problems into a theological perspective.
- The student will learn how to minister to these problems through a biblical methodology.

### **Required Texts:**

- Stuart Scott, Heath Lambert 2012  
*Counseling The Hard Cases*. B&H Publishing  
ISBN:978-1-4336-7222-4 (305 pages.)
- Carl R. Trueman 2022  
*Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution* CROSSWAY Publishing  
ISBN:978-1-4335-7930-1 (169 pages.)
- Dr. Jenn Chen, 2024  
*Biblical Counseling and Mental Disorder Diagnosis*, Shepherd Press.  
ISBN:-978-1-63342-326-8 (120 pages)
- Heath Lambert 2016  
*A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry*  
Zondervan Publishing  
ISBN: 9780310518167 (315 pages.)
- <https://biblicalcounseling.com/resource-library/podcast-episodes/the-abuse-pendulum-part-1-2/>  
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/resource-library/podcast-episodes/the-abuse-pendulum-part-2-2/>  
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/resource-library/articles/the-abuse-pendulum-part-3/>

### **Collateral or Recommended Texts:**

- Shaw, Mark. March 2014  
*The Heart of Addictions*,  
Focus Publishing  
ISBN-10: 1885904681 (301 Pages)
- Heath Lambert 2013  
*Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace*  
Zondervan Publishing  
ISBN-13: 9780310499237

### **Course Requirements and Assessments:**

By first class, January 26, Read and submit critique of *Strange New World*. Be ready to discuss your findings, new information, agreements, and disagreements in class. Mark your pages of discussion so the class can turn there easily. Critique should be 2-3 pages.

Each and every class will discuss a case study from *Counseling The Hard Cases*. Come to class prepared with questions and insights into the weekly case study. Your class

participation will help you and the class to grow in understanding the difficult topics. Be prepared and do participate.

By February 2<sup>nd</sup>, read and submit a critique of *Biblical Counseling and Mental Disorder Diagnosis*. Critique should be 2-3 pages.

By March 2nd, read and submit a critique of *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*. We will begin discussing the book earlier, but your critique is due on March 2nd. Critique should be 2-3 pages.

Each student will choose a topic from *Counseling the Hard Cases*, between chapters 3 and 8 to research and present to the class through a PowerPoint presentation and a 10-12 page paper presenting their research and conclusions. The paper is to consist of an explanation of the dilemma and a helpful biblical approach to counseling. The paper must include footnotes of resources used in the research. If there are enough students to collaborate on a topic, both students will present the topic and PowerPoint.

## **Grading**

**Reading and critiques = 30%**

**Class participation = 30%**

**Research paper and presentation = 40%**

## **BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:**

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on turning in papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: <https://www.btswritingcenter.net/>

In addition, the Writing Center runs 2-3 Writing Workshops every semester. They are very helpful and highly recommended.

## **BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy**

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for

the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

Course Schedule:	Teacher	Topic
January 26	Dr. Wisner	Introduction / Case Study /Strange New World
February 2	Dr. Wisner	Case study/ Biblical Counseling and Mental Disorder Diagnosis
February 9	Dr. Wisner	Case Study / Theology of Biblical Counseling
February 16	Dr. Wisner	Case Study / Theology of Biblical Counseling
<b>February 23</b>	<b>Dr. Wisner</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
March 2	Dr. Wisner	Case Study / Abuse
March 9	Dr. Wisner	Case Study / Depression
March 16	Dr. Wisner	Case Study / TBD Class choice
March 23	Student Presentation	TBD
March 30	Student Presentation	TBD
April 6	Student Presentation	TBD
April 13	Student Presentation	TBD

### Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand. Students may miss up to three classes with impunity.

[NOTE: Standard BTS Attendance Policy is that students may not miss any more than three classes without a course penalty. Given the reality of distance-based students and video conference options, if students **clearly identify at the beginning of the semester that they will primarily be asynchronous students (depending on the digital recording of class because of a conflict with their schedule)**, then the student may attend without incurring a penalty for their “absences,” providing they are turning in all their work on time. Please see the BTS Faculty Handbook for more information on synchronous and asynchronous video conference students and policies and the commitments a faculty member agrees to when they teach a video conference or a live hybrid class]

## **Class Policies and Procedures:**

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note taking methods in class and keeping computer usage to a minimum.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.
- Late assignments will incur a -3 point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the semester.

## **Video Conference Policies and Procedures:**

- Please utilize the BTS “Best VC (Video Conference) Practices” information for the course.
- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screen will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.

## **Course Bibliography / Extended Bibliography**

Berg, Jim. *Freedom that Lasts: Finding Freedom God's Way*. Taylors, SC: Faith Baptist Church, 2013.

Scott, Stuart. *Killing Sin Habits*.  
Focus Publishing, 2013.

Shaw, Mark E. *Addiction-Proof Parenting: Biblical Prevention Strategies*.  
Focus Publishing, 2010.

Wright, Norman H., 2003, *The New Guide to Crisis & Trauma Counseling*  
Regal Books Publisher

Shaw, Mark E *Divine Intervention: Hope and Help for Families of Addicts*.  
Focus Publishing, 2007, 2011.

Adams, J. 1986, *How to Help People Change*  
Zondervan Publishing

Shaw, Mark *The Heart of Addiction: A Biblical Perspective*.  
Focus Publishing, 2008, 2018.

Welch, Edward T. *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2001, 2011.

## **GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC**

<b>A to A-</b>	<b>B to B-</b>	<b>C to C-</b>	<b>D to D-</b>
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors
Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent
Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, over used, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to <i>Turabian's Manual for Writers</i>	Paper generally conforms to <i>Turabian's Manual for Writers</i>	Paper somewhat conforms to <i>Turabian's Manual for Writers</i>	Paper does not conform to <i>Turabian's Manual for Writers</i>

## BTS Outcomes Evaluation

**Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5**

**1: this outcome is not covered in this class**

**2: this outcome is only touched on in this class**

**3: this outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material**

**4: this outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)**

**5: this outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)**

1. Scripture: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God's word.
2. Reformed Theology: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
3. Local Church: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
4. Wisdom: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
5. Discipleship: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
6. Communication: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.
7. Worldview: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God's word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
8. Leadership: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rationale (one sentence)
Scripture	5	Students must consistently apply Scripture to advanced counseling scenarios, diagnoses, case studies, and their major research paper.
Reformed Theology	4	The course emphasizes theological anthropology, doctrinal foundations of counseling, and biblically grounded diagnoses, though not as its primary disciplinary focus.
Local Church	3	Counseling practice is assumed to function within real ministry contexts, but students are not required to complete a direct local-church project.
Wisdom	5	Students must demonstrate pastoral discernment, maturity, and wise application of biblical principles to complex, sensitive counseling dilemmas throughout discussions and assignments.

Discipleship	5	Biblical counseling is framed as applied discipleship, requiring students to understand sanctification, obedience, and spiritual care for people in crisis.
Communication	4	Students communicate through written critiques, class discussion, and a formal research presentation, all requiring clarity, precision, and pastoral tact.
Worldview	4	The course trains students to understand secular and biblical diagnoses, cultural pressures, and worldview distortions (e.g., identity theories, sexual revolution) as part of advanced counseling.
Leadership	3	Students learn to provide guidance and direction in counseling settings, although leadership development is not a major assessed component.